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A

SERMON

Preached before the

KING

AT

NEWMARKET

April 24. 1670.

By MILES BARNE Fellow of
S^t. *Peter's College* in *Cambridge.*

Printed by His Majesties special Command.

By Miles Barnes
Fellow of St Pe-
ter's College
in Cambridge

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1 S^t. John Chap. 5. ver. 4.

And this is the Victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith.

THe Church of Christ, here below, is justly stiled the Church Militant, not onely in distinction to that which is Triumphant above; but likewise upon the score of those many enemies, which she encounters in the world: and consequently every member of the same, at his first entrance into it, his initiation into Christianity, doth solemnly denounce war against the Pomps, and Vanities of this wicked world; Our life is termed a continual Warfare; Christ is called the Captain of our Salvation; his Apostles acquaint us, how much they suffered because they would not deny the Faith; nor turn Renegadoes from Him: particularly,

His ſtout Champion Saint *Paul*, gives in a large account, of the ſeveral Conflicts, which he had with the world; And how he came off more than Conquerour through Chriſt that ſtrengthned him: when he was in danger of ſuffering Martyrdom at *Rome*, he made it his pious boaſt, that *he had fought the good fight*, that *he had kept the Faith*; And when he would render his Chriſtian impregnable, againſt the aſſaults of the world, he commands him to *put on the whole Armour of God*, (otherguiſe weapons then thoſe which either *Homer* armed *Achilles* with, or *Virgil* his *Æneas*) But above all he bids him take the *ſhield of Faith*, wherewith he boldly aſſures him, that he ſhould be able to quench *all the fiery Darts of the wicked*. For,

This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our Faith.

I cannot do greater right to the Text, then if I ſhould awhile inſiſt upon, and recount to you the ſeveral Trophies, and noble Atchievements of Faith: How that not onely the Authour, and Finiſher of it, for the joy that was ſet before him, endured the Croſs, de-

deſpiſing the ſhame, and was therefore ſet down at the right hand of the Throne of God; But moreover how its firſt embracers obtained a good report, as well by the greatneſs of their ſufferings, as the ſtrangeneſs of their conqueſts. Their ſufferings were as great, as either wit, or malice could make them; And yet their courage was far greater, for they did not onely triumph over their moſt exquiſite torments, but oftentimes conquered their moſt obdurate tormentours.

As for their conqueſts; they were carried on by no humane force; they uſed no open Hoſtility; the ſtratagems of war, were as much againſt their ſimplicity, as upon this ſcore, they were contrary to the expreſs words of their betrayed Maſter. *Peter put up thy ſword, it is enough.* There was but one ſingle blow given, and that, too, upon the juſteſt occaſion that ever preſented it ſelf in the world; For it was to reſcue the very Lord of Life, out of the hands of that miſcreant, who betrayed Him to Death: And yet he that gave it received a ſevere check

check for his pains. *They that take the ſword ſhall periſh by the ſword.*

Let *Mahomet* propagate his ſenceleſs Alcoran by force of Arms; let him by the ſame power, he tyranniz'd over the bodies of his vaſſals, captivate their ſouls; and ſo at once betray both to utter ruine. Let *Enthuſiaſts*, and *Fanaticks* dictate the whimſies of a cras'd Brain, thoſe ſlaviſh Doctrines, which are but the neceſſary reſult of a moroſe temper, for the immediate Oracles of God, the χαρίσματα the Gifts, and Graces of his free and Princely Spirit. And if they be not preſently received; let them betake themſelves to open violence; commit the moſt horrid Outrages upon their fellow-creatures; as they have done in ſeveral parts of the world, when once they got the ſword into their hands. But the Goſpel of Peace knows no ſuch boyſterous methods. Chriſts Souldiers, for the Propagation of his Doctrines, never drew any ſword, but that of the Spirit. They uſed none of thoſe cruel Engines, by which the Chieftains of the world carried on their

their bloudy Conqueſts. Their weapons were ſpiritual. The Victories which they aim'd at were over mens minds. They had no defence but the *Breaſt-plate of Faith*: And yet they fought not *againſt fleſh and bloud* onely, but againſt *Principalities*, againſt *Powers*, againſt *the Rulers of the darkneſs of this world*, againſt *Spiritual wickedneſs in high places*. And as they fought againſt them, ſo they overcame them. By their Faith they ſpoiled Principalities; deveſted the evil ſpirits of their uſurped power over the minds of men; threw them out of their Temples; ſilenced their Oracles; beat down their images, making ſhew of them openly, and triumphing over them. And as the *Romans*, to magnifie their Conqueſts, were wont to lead their captived Enemies in Triumph through their Cities; ſo the Apoſtles, by the might of Chriſt, carried the powers of Hell in open triumph, as thoſe whom they had victoriouſly taken captive. Thus, by the light of Faith, was the Prince of darkneſs vanquiſhed, and all his ſtrong holds caſt down.

And as they thus conquered him, ſo did they all thoſe whom he had made Enemies to the Faith. Neither the greatneſs of the Romane Empire on the one ſide, nor the malicious practiſes of the Infidel Jews on the other; neither the wit, & crafty wilineſs of the Philoſophers, who decried the Diſciples for ſo many credulous Fops; nor yet the Harangues, which the Oratours made againſt the meaneſt of Chriſts Doctrines, ὡς ὐ σεμνόν τι, ϗ καινὸν μάθημα, as containing nothing in them either Great, or New; were able to diſparage, or withſtand the Faith. Inſomuch, that notwithſtanding the great oppoſition it met with in the world; The deſpicableneſs, as to all outward appearances, of the Apoſtles who firſt promulged it; the great prejudices which the generality of men had taken up againſt it, (*as concerning this Sect, we know that it is every where ſpoken againſt*) and that moſt forcible tie of intereſt, which hindred many from becoming Chriſtians; I ſay, notwithſtanding theſe great diſadvantages, *it grew mightily, and prevailed;*

Acts 28. 22.

vailed; And *the Sect of the Nazarens*, (as *Tertullus* maliciously called the Christians) was in a short time more numerous then any Sect whatsoever; the Doctrines of Christ more universally received, then the *Dogmata*, the Opinions, of any the most renowned Philosophers. In sum, the Disciples, by believing on the name of the Lord Jesus, from silly, cowardly persons, became valiant, and wise; conquering the strong, confuting the learned; baffling the wits, and overpowring the great ones: The Faith which they had received they valiantly maintained, in spite of bonds, and imprisonments; threats, and intreaties; through honours, and dishonours; cruel mockings, and scourgings; In a word; In spite of all the various, and most affrighting shapes which Death could present it self in. Thus the Disciples and Primitive Christians conquered the world; Thus the Fathers, and Prophets of old obtained a good report; Thus fought the noble Army of Martyrs; And thus, must all the Professours of Christianity behave themselves, in

their ſeveral combates with the world. For, *This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our Faith.*

That I may then proceed Methodically, and ſpeak diſtinctly to the ſeveral parts of my Text.

1. *I muſt ſhew what this Faith is which overcometh the world.*
2. *What are the neceſſary Qualifications to render it victorious.*
3. *That this Faith ſo Qualified is the ſureſt, and beſt way of overcoming the world.*

1. *What this Faith is which overcometh the world,* I need not go far to ſeek. The next words to the Text reſolve the doubt. *'Tis the Believing that Jeſus is the Son of God;* (that he is the true Meſsias,) and conſequently the Believing all his Threats and Promiſes, the obeying all his Precepts and Commands.

But becauſe we live in a ſceptical Age; an Age which is apt to ſtrike at the very Foundation of all Religion; and, with *Celſus* that Drolling Atheiſt, to object againſt the Chriſtians, that which makes them ſo; their very

ry Faith: * as if the Doctrines of Christianity were received without due examination. Though this Objection might very well be retorted upon themselves; For, who (I pray) are greater Dictatours, then the Opposers of Religion? And must not their followers be strangely credulous, who embrace the Prescripts of fallible men, in opposition to the Word of eternal Truth? Yet I shall briefly endeavour to shew, that Christ the second Person in the Trinity, whom we adore in expectation of eternal salvation, was the true Messias.

* Orig. cont. Cel. l. 1. φησὶ δέ τινας μὴ δεῖ βυλομένους δι δόναι τὴν λαμβάνειν λόγον περὶ ὧν πιστεύσι, &c.

Taking then for granted the Divine authority of the Scriptures, the Writings of the Old and New Testament: Though this must not be thought a Begging the Question; since there are better Arguments to prove them so, then can be produced for the truth of *Salust*, *Livy*, or any the most Authentick Historians: * This granted, 'tis manifest, that immediately upon the fall of *Adam* the Messias was promised, *The seed of the woman shall break the Serpents head*; and

* Vide Socin. de Aut. Script.

conſequently raiſe his poſterity to an higher pitch of preferment, than the integrity of his Creation entituled them to. That Chriſt, born in the fulneſs of time, was the then promiſed Meſsias, is manifeſt; ſince in him were fulfilled all the Propheſies relating either to the Birth, Life, Perſon, or offices of the Meſsias.

To begin with the Firſt. The coming of *Elias*, foretold by the Prophet *Malachi*: *Behold, I will ſend you* Elijah *the Prophet, before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.* Was not this accompliſhed by his forerunner Saint *John Baptiſt*, who by preaching repentance, by an extraordinary ſeverity, and gravity ſuitable to that Doctrine, *prepared the ways of the Lord, and made his paths ſtrait*? And are not the Jews moſt ſottiſhly barbarous, who will needs fetch *Elias* from *Abrahams* boſom, (that place of Reſt) and ſo make him, a ſecond time, undergo the miſeries of this life, for the fulfilling this propheſie? ſince whatſoever benefit they expected from him, they might have reaped from the ſtrict pat-

Mal. 4. 5.

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tern of the *holy Baptiſt*; whoſe life did ſo exactly reſemble, if not outdo the Auſterities of *Elias*; that (unleſs they were wilfully blind) they muſt needs conclude him to be but a type of Saint *John Baptiſt*.

As for the Propheſie of *Iſaiah*; *Behold, a Virgin ſhall conceive, and bear a Son*; He that denieth ſuch to have been the miraculous Birth of Chriſt, doth him a greater outrage, then his moſt malicious enemies the Jews ever offered him; though they had moſt ſevere Laws againſt Adulterers, and means ſufficient to prove that he was not born in marriage; for which they might have had the Confeſsion of *Joſeph* his reputed Father, and *Mary* his Mother. *Iſa.* 7. 14. *Deut.* 22. *v.* 23, 24.

The place of his Nativity was expreſsly appointed by the Prophet *Micah*, to be *Bethlehem in Judea*. And is it not manifeſt, that Chriſt born there, was the very perſon deſigned by the Prophet? as well by the anſwer, which *Herod* gave to the wiſe men, after he had enquired of the Doctours of the Law, where he ſhould be born; as *Mic.* 53. 3.

by.

by that unparallelled murther (when he found himſelf mocked by them) of about fourteen hundred infants, that ſo he might be ſure to cut him off, whom the Jews at that time moſt earneſtly expected for their Deliverer. So horrid a Maſſacre! that nothing but a curſed jealouſie of looſing his uſurped power, could have made the bloudy Tyrant guilty of it.

Then as for the manner, and condition of his life, foretold by *Iſaiah*; *that he ſhould be deſpiſed, and rejected of men, a man of ſorrows, and acquainted with grief*: Were not all theſe doleful paſſages verified in Chriſt? Did he not ſpend about thirty years of his Life, in a ſolitary, abject condition? When he made himſelf known unto the world, was he not upbraided with the meanneſs of his parentage? *Is not this the Carpenters Son?* Was he not *a man of ſorrows*, when in his Agony he complained, that his ſoul was exceeding ſorrowful, even unto Death? And was he not *acquainted with grief*, when he uttered thoſe Tragical words, upon the Croſs,

Iſa. 53. 3.

Croſs, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* *Mat.* 27. 46.

Thoſe words of *David, they pierced my hands, and my feet,* apparently ſpecifie the manner of his Death: And they muſt relate to Chriſt, ſince in *Davids* time there was no ſuch puniſhment in faſhion among the Jews. And were not all the other circumſtances of it fulfilled to the leaſt Punctilio? For, what could make thoſe rude ſouldiers, who pierced his Sacred Side; that the ſcripture might be fulfilled, *They ſhall look on him whom they have pierced*; ſo civil, as not to break his legs alſo? was not this done that another might be fulfilled, *A bone of him ſhall not be broken?* *Pſal.* 22. 16. *Zech.* 12. 10.

Was not likewiſe his Reſurrection foreſhewn by the ſame holy Writer? *Thou wilt not leave my ſoul in Hell, neither wilt thou ſuffer thine Holy One to ſee Corruption. David* could not ſpeak this of himſelf, ſince he was laid unto his Fathers, put to bed in the duſt, and ſuffered the corruption of the grave; But it had its completion in Chriſt, who accord- *Pſal.* 16. 10.

ing to his promiſe roſe again from the Dead; in ſpite of all the attempts of the Jews to the contrary, their ſealing the Stone, and ſetting a ſtrict Watch: For it was impoſsible, that the Conquerour of Death, ſhould be detained Priſoner by the Grave.

Were not all the miracles, which were to be wrought by the Meſsias, fully performed by him? He gave eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, ſpeech to the dumb, feet to the lame, reſtored the dead to life. Theſe were ſuch ſtupendious things, as ſurpaſſed the power of Nature, for their greatneſs; exceeded the ſlight of Magick, for their reality; and were directly contrary to any Diabolical deſign, for as much as they aimed at the good, and benefit of mankind. And 'tis very obſervable, that when the ſnarling Phariſees, would have blaſted the credit of his miracles; they uſed ſuch a ridiculous argument * as onely ſerved to prove, how well they deſerved that character which Chriſt gave of them, *viz.* that they were *of their Father the Devil*, or more then ſo, ſince they endeavoured

* *He caſteth out Devils through the Prince of Devils*, S. Mat. 9. 34.

ed to exceed him, in his eſſential property, of lying, and calumniating.

Then as for his Offices. He was to be a King; Infidel Jews! and ſo he was; though not as ye vainly imagined; that he ſhould prove a victorious Prince, conquer all the Nations of the earth, by the dint of his Sword; And that all the Potentates of the world, ſhould lay down their Sceptres at his Triumphant feet. From which of your Prophets, could ye fetch this conceit? At his coming were not *ſwords to be beaten into Plowſhares, and ſpears into pruning-hooks*? And therefore ſurely he never intended to march in Battel aray, or to engage in any bloudy Conqueſts. *Was not he to be lowly, riding upon an Aſs, and a Colt the Foal of an Aſs*? and therefore a deſpiſer of the Pomp, and Grandeur of this world. Did he not plainly diſown all Sovereignty here on Earth? *My kingdom is not of this World.* And, indeed, what though he had been more victorious, than *Alexander*? won more Battels, than ever

Iſa. 2. 4. *Zech.* 9. 9. S. *John* 18. 36.

Cesar did? Would this have given him a renown comparable to those victories, which he obtained over hearts, their unruly passions, and appetites? What though he had appeared in more magnificent splendour, than *Herod* when he sat on his gaudy Throne; would this have been a Garb half so becoming the Son of God, as those Robes of Righteousness, which made him shine so bright in the world? His Kingly Power was conspicuous in more illustrious Instances, through the whole System of the Creation. The Angels were ambitious to minister unto him. The Devils trembled at his word, and fell like lightning before him. The wind and the Sea obeyed him. Hunger and Thirst, those impatient desires, waited his leisure. Sickness and Health, Death and the Grave, and Hell it self were forced to acknowledge his Sovereignty.

As for his Priestly Office. The Aaronical part of it he dispatched by offering himself a sacrifice to his incensed Father. And doth

doth he not ſtill continue a Prieſt, after the Order of *Melchizedek*, in bleſsing us, and crowning us with the Gifts and Graces of the Holy Ghoſt?

As for his Prophetical office, which conſiſted firſt in making known to us the Will of God; This he did through the whole courſe of his Life; but eſpecially in that Divine Sermon on the Mount, wherein he added whatſoever was wanting, explained whatſoever was obſcure in the Old Law: and propounded Bleſſedneſs upon ſuch eaſie, ſuitable, and pleaſant Terms, that we cannot miſs of Heaven, without making our ſelves miſerable on Earth. As for the ſecond part of it, which conſiſted in foretelling things to come; of this he gave many Inſtances, particularly that ſad one of the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; which he ſighed out in the very anguiſh of his Soul, *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem; Behold, your Houſe is left unto you Deſolate.* Which was accordingly accompliſhed by the *Romans*, under the con- *Mat.* 23. 27.

duct of *Titus*, about the 70 year of our Lord. When the miserable Jews, too late, found him a true Prophet to their cost. For from that very time they became a most distressed, and despised Nation. Instead of being any longer the Darlings of Heaven, the People of God, and the Seed of the Faithful; they became the scorn of men, the refuse of the Earth, and a Proverb of Infidelity. An instance so dismal, attended with such Tragical circumstances, that it alone is enough to strike terrour into all those, who will not believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

But if to this we add the miracles which he performed, The Divinity of his sayings; *For never man spake like him*: The unblameableness of his Life; *For he did no sin, neither was guile found in his Mouth*: If to these the infallible testimony of the *Father*, the *Word*, and the *Holy Ghost*; the Confession of the *Demoniack*, *What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God most high?* If to these the dismal Prodigies which hap-

S. *John* 7. 46.

1 S. *Pet.* 2. 22.

1 S. *Joh.* 5. 7.

S. *Luk.* 8. 28.

happened at his Death: As the renting of the Vail of the Temple, to ſhew the Abrogation of the Old Law: the cleaving of the Rock, to upbraid the more ſtony hearts of his Crucifiers: The total Eclipſe of the Sun, that it might not behold the ſetting of the Sun of Righteouſneſs. If to theſe, his powerful Reſurrection; and after he had converſed fourty days upon Earth, his no leſs wonderful Aſcenſion: And laſtly, the great eſteem his very enemies had of him, manifeſted in the motion which *Tiberius* made to the Senate for his *Apotheoſis*: He who ſeriouſly conſiders theſe things, will be forced to confeſs with the Centurion, *truly this was the Son of God.* Which Confeſſion is that *Faith which overcometh the World.* And that it may prove effectual, it muſt be duly Qualified: The ſecond thing to be conſidered, *What are the neceſſary Qualifications to render our Faith victorious.*

I. Then our Faith muſt be lively, Warm, and Active. For, if a dull, languid habit B

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of Faith, would do the great work of our Salvation; Then might those who are dead in trespasses and sins, hope for as fair an inheritance in the Kingdom of Heaven, as any, who by mortifying their earthly members, raised themselves to newness of Life; Then might those lazy, cowardly souls, who never had courage enough to give Battle to any one single Lust, expect the same recompense of reward, with those generous spirits, who by the difficult, and assiduous Acquists of virtue obtained a noble Victory over themselves; Then might the Regions of Purity be defiled by things common and unclean; And Heaven be so far from being a reward, that it would be as much shunned by all good men, as Hell is now dreaded by the wicked. If an Historical, notional Faith would serve our turn, then might *Lucifer*, and his cursed crew hope to regain their first glorious estate, (*For the very Devils believe, and tremble*) notwithstanding we are ascertain'd, that *they are reserved in everlasting chains, under Darkness, unto*

S. *Jude* 6.

to the judgement of the great Day. In ſum then; that I may neither enter into diſpute with the Solifidian, concerning Juſtification by Faith alone; nor yet contend with the Romaniſt, whether good works have any part in that glorious Act; I am ſure Saint *James* is poſitive in his determination; *For as the Body without the Spirit is Dead, ſo is Faith without Works alſo*: And conſequently no more able to obtain that difficult Victory, which is here attributed to a lively Faith, then a dead Body is to perform the functions of Life. And indeed, as *Epicurus* was the greateſt Atheiſt in the world, in allowing the exiſtence of God; but then, (as if he had ſuſpected either his Prudence, or Juſtice in managing the affairs of the world) complementing him out of his Sovereignty over it, for fear of diſturbing the ſerenity of his Being: ſo will the Solifidian be found to be the trueſt Infidel, who allowing Faith to be neceſſary to ſalvation, moſt perfidiouſly ſtrips it of all thoſe enlivening Properties, which might fit, and S. *Jam.* 2. 26.

adorn it for ſo great an attainment.

2. Our Faith muſt be Uniform, and Undivided. For *there is one Lord, one Faith, one Baptiſm, and one onely name under Heaven, given unto men whereby we muſt be ſaved; even the name of the Lord Jeſus.* So long as the Chriſtians continued together, and were of the ſame mind; ſo long as they maintained ſimplicity, and liberality, being ſolicitous for nothing but an Holy life; when all the gain they ſtudied was Godlineſs; when all the ſtrife, and emulation they had, was to outvie each other in the Practiſe of Piety; when there were no Diviſions, but of Goods, and Poſſeſsions to be parted among the Needy: Then did the Church flouriſh, and a daily Addition was made of them that ſhould be ſaved. But when, inſtead of theſe lovely Qualities, there aroſe Sects, and Schiſms; when once that unhappy Diſtinction was made of *Paul*, and *Apollo*; of *Chriſt*, and *Cephas*; when men began to be *lovers of themſelves, more then of God*; when the old ſtrife was renewed; *which of them*

Eph. 4. 5.

Acts 4. 12.

ſhould

ſhould be the greateſt; when the loſs of a Preferment, was cruelly revenged upon the Church, by the ſetting up of an Hereſie; when the wits began to deride the ſimplicity of the Goſpel; and the learned were divided about points of Faith: Then did the Church truly ſuffer, and ſuſtained more damage by theſe inteſtine broyles; then by the hotteſt perſecutions of the Heathen Emperours. Of the truth whereof; we have too ſad an inſtance in the fourth Century; when the tares of Arianiſm, had almoſt quite choaked the wheat; when the gates of Hell, were ſo near prevailing againſt the Church; that the Catholick Faith ſeemed to have but one Confeſſour; the Church of Chriſt to be no where viſible, but in *Athanaſius* his Temple; if that common ſaying be true, *The whole world againſt* Athanaſius, *and* Athanaſius *againſt the whole world.* So much it concerns us to keep the *Unity of the Spirit, in the bond of Peace.* For, as a Kingdom, ſo a Church divided within it ſelf cannot ſtand.

And since this cannot be effected by the sole Threats, and Menaces of the Gospel, (though most severe against Schismaticks) nor yet by the utmost power Christ hath committed to his Church, the dreadful sentence of excommunication; by Saint *Paul* defined to be the *delivering up to Satan*: (For what will they care for the Power of the Keys, who account it their priviledge to be without the pale of the Church?) Therefore is it, that God hath ordained Kings to be Nursing Fathers; And from hence arises another way (as ancient as *Constantine* the *Great*, the first Christian Emperour) of dealing with obstinate Dissenters, the enacting and *executing* Penal Laws against them. And may we not yet hope, that they whom forbearance made dangerous, and *Toleration* it self at length rendred intollerable; may at last be reclaimed, (however, the danger prevented) by a late Renowned Act? An Act worthy the Royal *Fiat* of him who justly weareth the glorious Title of *Defender*

1 *Cor.* 5. 5.

der of the Faith; and becoming the greatneſs of its eſtabliſhers, who could never have done God and their Country, the Church and State better Service; than by preventing and ſuppreſsing Schiſmatical and Seditious *Conventicles*.

3. Our Faith muſt be ſtedfaſt, and well grounded. For if it be *toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine*, it muſt of neceſsity at laſt ſuffer Shipwrack. They that have itching ears open to every Novel Teacher, are in danger of forfeiting the Ancient, Catholick Faith. Thus if inſtead of relying upon the Authority of Primitive Fathers and Councils, we admit of every upſtart Writer; will not this at length invalidate the commands of the Apoſtles? If we receive our Religion from the Tribunal of the Civil Magiſtrates; may not this at laſt bring us under the condemnation of the Phariſees; of *rendring the Word of God of none effect, through their Traditions*? And as it muſt be ſtedfaſt, ſo it muſt be well grounded. That is, we 3.

must be well assured of the truth of it our selves, and able to *convince the gainsayers.*

For *our own assurance,* 'tis enough, that we have the same *Faith which was once delivered to the Saints*; That they had the honour to converse with the Authour of it; that they were Persons of the greatest Integrity; and therefore would not deceive others; that they were Persons very inquisitive and circumspect; and therefore would not be deceived themselves; that it was confirmed by miracles, attested and sealed by their Bloud; that it prevailed in spite of all opposition, and hath been kept entire in all Ages of the Church; According to Christs own Promise, *That the Gates of Hell should never prevail against it.* And now I might very well challenge our Modern Infidels, to produce half such convincing Arguments, for the certainty of any thing which they believe, as these which the Christian hath to assure him of the truth of his Faith. But the prosecuti-

Mat. 16. 18.

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on of this Topick, (though very pleasing) would carry me beyond the limits of a Sermon.

The best way to convince gain-sayers, is to hold fast the faithful word, as it hath been taught, or as the Greek renders it; which is *according to Doctrine*; (not according to Fancy, private Interpretation, or the Pretensions to an extraordinary Light) For the constancy of the Christian in his Profession, hath always been found one of the best Arguments to confute Hereticks. Faith thus qualified, that hath good works for its Life-Guard, that is at unity with its self, that is built upon the Foundation of the Apostles, and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner stone; shall stand like an impregnable Fortress, against all the Batteries of the World. The last thing to be considered, κατὰ τὴν διδαχὴν, Tit. 1.9.

3. *That Faith thus Qualified is the best, and surest way of overcoming the World.* 3.

What is here meant by the World, let Saint *John* determine; *The Lusts of the flesh*, 1S. John. 2. 16.

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the Lusts of the eye, and the Pride of Life: to which we may add evil Examples, Persecutions, and in a word, whatsoever Bait the great Adversary of Mankind throws in our way, to seduce us from our Religion; and consequently as he dispossessed our First Parents of a Terrestrial, so to prevent our arrival at a Celestial Paradise.

And are these the strongest Forces, which the World can muster up, and bring into the Field against us? *Impar congressus*! The Flesh against the Spirit! The members against the mind! impotent Earth against the Powers of Heaven! all of them in open Rebellion; And may they receive a Doom answerable to their Crime.

1. Then Faith bids you consider the baseness and weakness of your Enemies. Lusts and Pride; Things which the common consent of Mankind, hath branded with a note of Infamy. He that makes his Belly his God, hates to be counted a Glutton. The covetous wretch, though he detesteth the

the virtue, courts the title of a liberal Perſon. He that is moſt addicted to vain-glory, would not be thought ambitious. He that is ſeduced by every little temptation, thinks he is diſparaged when you count him one of an eaſie facil temper. Can any thing then be more ignoble, than to be led captive by ſuch vices which proclaim their baſeneſs, by diſowning their name? was it not a ſtrange overſight in *Eſau*, to ſell his birth-right for a meſs of pottage? A prodigious piece of folly in *Judas*, to betray his Maſter for a few pence? In *Luciſer* to forfeit Heaven, to gratifie his pride? And yet of this rank are all thoſe, who ſurrender their Faith into the power of ſuch mean adverſaries. 'Tis highly againſt the points of Honour, for a Perſon of Quality to enter the field, and engage with a Peaſant. How much more diſhonourable is it, for an high and Heaven-born Soul to be overcome, by the low and baſe temptations of the World?

2. 2. Faith bids you consult your own strength, and gives you power to exert it. *Phil.* 4. 13. The Apostle could *do all things through Christ which strengthned him*; and if we cannot do so too, 'tis not because Christ is wanting to us, but we to our selves. The flesh, indeed, may war against the Spirit; The members may mutiny against the mind: But 'tis at their own peril if they do; for the one is weak and unwieldy, the other ready and active; and if the members ever prevail, it must be through the consent, degeneracy, or inadvertency of the mind. We disparage our faculties, and dishonour God who gave them; when we think all the freedom left us, consisteth in a liberty to sin. It were better for us if we had no wills at all, than that they should lye under such a fatal doom. We may, if we please, exercise that dominion, which is the undoubted right of our Supreme Powers. A manifest proof whereof is, that there are very few who are totally captivated by sin.

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And they who are, have taken more pains, thus vilely to enſlave themſelves, than they need have been at in aſſerting the glorious liberty of the Sons of God. 'Tis far more difficult to conquer the checks of Conſcience, than to keep it void of offence both towards God, and towards man.

3. Faith propounds to you the joys of Heaven, and aſſures you, that you ſhall be partaker of them, if you continue faithful unto the end. And ſhall the fading riches of this World, be preferred to the immortal treaſures of the other? The tranſient, dull, nauſeous delights of ſenſe, to thoſe vigorous, unallayed pleaſures, which are at Gods right hand for evermore? Shall the ambition of being great here, hinder us from being ſo hereafter? Shall the unconſtant blaſt of popular applauſe, prevent us of the joyful acclamations of Angels? Shall an earthly be more valuable, than an Heavenly Crown? Shall light afflictions which are but for a mo- 3.

ment, make us forfeit an eternal weight of Glory?

These are such Considerations as have hitherto prevailed in the World; and they must do so still; unless we can dethrone the King of Kings; murther the immortality of the Soul; cancel the immutable laws of Good and Evil; banish the reward which belongs to the one, and take away the punishment which is due to the other.

And therefore in the last place. That you may neither be overcome by the temptations of the World, nor think the joys of Heaven unattainable; Faith propounds to your imitation a whole cloud of witnesses, of Apostles and Prophets, of Martyrs and Confessours; who acquitting themselves valiantly, received a Crown for their recompense.

And as Faith is the means of overcoming the world, so is it the victory it self.

ſelf. For after it hath fought the good fight here below, and reigned till it hath put all its enemies under its feet; then it begins to offer a kind of ſacred violence to the Regions above, ſeeth Heaven open, and Chriſt ſtanding at the right hand of God; and ſo never ceaſeth to be victorious, until it be overcome in an abyſs of Glory, and ſwallowed up in the beatifical Viſion.

To conclude. Let not this Faith which heretofore ſubdued Kingdoms, and wrought righteouſneſs, be it ſelf overcome by the iniquity of Chriſtian diviſions; This Faith which fought with beaſts at *Epheſus*, let it not be conquered by any brutiſh paſsion; Let not this Faith which hath hitherto ſilenced the Diſputer of this World, be now drolled out of the Church by the Atheiſt; This Faith which ſtopped the mouths of lions, let it not be devoured by the *Leviathan* of our age. In a word; Keep this Faith which renowneth Kings, and ma-

keth Princes famous, which enobleth Nobility, and keepeth the people in due subjection, which causeth a nation to flourish, which will render our lives happy here, and crown us with bliss hereafter.

FINIS.

Page 12. lin. 3. for *hundred*, read *thousand*.

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John North
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